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Diana T Fritz 03/15/2007 03:01:52 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

March 29, 2004

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 905 - UNKNOWN)
TAGS: PREL, PTER
Captions: None
Subject: CENTCOM COMMANDER DISCUSSES IRAQ, SYRIA, TERRORISM
FINANCING WITH SHAYKH MOHAMMED BIN ZAYED
Ref: None

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 00905

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: POL
INFO: P/M ECON DAO USLO RSO DCM AMB

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MMWAHBA
DRAFTED: POL:JFMAYBURY
CLEARED: A/DCM:HOLSIN-WINDECKER USLO:RSIMM

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3748
INFO RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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RUCJACC/USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2/CCJ4/CCJ5// IMMEDIATE
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 000905

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ARP, AND NEA/NGA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/28/2014
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [AF](#) [SY](#) [IZ](#) [PK](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: CENTCOM COMMANDER DISCUSSES IRAQ, SYRIA,
TERRORISM FINANCING WITH SHAYKH MOHAMMED BIN ZAYED

Classified by Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba, reasons

1.5 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: CENTCOM Commander General John Abizaid on March 17 discussed Iraq's transfer of sovereignty and potential future leadership, Pakistan's military operations against Al Qaida along the Afghan border, terrorism financing, U.S. approaches to Syria, with Abu Dhabi Deputy Crown Prince and UAE Armed Forces Chief of Staff LTG Shaykh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MbZ) in Abu Dhabi. The two sides also reviewed U.S.-UAE military cooperation, including the UAE's request for Predator. General Abizaid also visited the 1,200 U.S. troops stationed at Al Dhafra Air Base. End Summary.

¶2. (S) The Ambassador, CENTCOM Polad Ambassador Litt, Executive Officer Col. Reynes, Col. Gauthier (J5), Brig. Gen. Custer (J2), USLO, and Polchief (notetaker) attended. MbZ was accompanied by Land Forces Commander Major General Saeed Al Rumaithy and Special Advisor Jack McGuinness.

Pakistan

¶3. (S/NF) Abizaid and MbZ discussed Pakistan's role in the war on terror and Pakistan's recent campaign against Al Qaida in Waziristan. MbZ said Pakistan was taking the kind of action that will make a difference. MbZ asked Abizaid if Pakistan was coordinating its operation with the U.S. and sharing information with the U.S. about the Taliban. Abizaid said that he would be meeting with President Musharraf in two days to discuss ways to improve cooperation.

Terrorism financing

¶4. (S/NF) Abizaid and MbZ exchanged views about where terrorists, such as those responsible for the Madrid bombings, get their financial support. Abizaid suspected that the Madrid bombings were carried out by an Al Qa'ida-related "franchise group" with financial links to the Gulf, most likely Saudi Arabia. He told MbZ that the financial backers are as guilty as those who planted the bombs. MbZ said it was important to understand the long-established connections terror groups have with with charities. He also opined that the U.S. needed to examine more closely how terror groups recruit their members as well as their operational logistics. MbZ also inquired about prisoners taken by Coalition forces and their interrogation. He also inquired as to whether Zarqawi was still alive. Abizaid said there was no doubt that he was.

Syria

¶5. (S/NF) MbZ strongly recommended that the U.S. deal with Syria's Bashar forcefully. He said the UAE tried very hard to talk to Bashar about allowing resistance elements to infiltrate Iraq from Syria. "I am afraid Bashar didn't get the message yet," MbZ said. MbZ urged the U.S. to send the right message to Bashar - a message he can understand. MbZ said the Arab press accuses the U.S. of dictating policy to the Arab world, so the U.S. might as well dictate its terms to Syria. Abizaid acknowledged that the Syrians are in trouble and are unable to keep extremists from crossing the border into Iraq.

Iraq

¶16. (S/NF) With respect to Iraq, MbZ told Abizaid that he had heard the Iraqis had requested that martial law be imposed for a period of three months following the transfer of sovereignty. He said he agreed with this because Iraqis need to feel there is a command structure and that the situation is under control. MbZ and Abizaid also exchanged views about the proposed Iraqi leadership structure during the interim period and possible candidates for the three presidency positions and the prime ministership. MbZ said he liked the idea of a strong prime minister who takes decisions and shows strength and leadership. MbZ also favored the Iraqi decision to have a civilian heading the Ministry of Defense. MbZ said he thought that Iyad Alawi, a Shi'a with the Iraqi National Accord, is a promising candidate for the Prime Minister slot. MbZ said that he had met Alawi a week earlier in London and liked the fact that he put Iraq's interests before his sect. The two sides said they admired Adnan Pachachi, and MbZ asked whether Abizaid thought Pachachi might become one of the three presidents given that he is widely respected and wise. Abizaid said it was true that he is seen as the elder statesman, but he may not be taken seriously in some quarters.

¶17. (S/NF) MbZ also told Abizaid that it would be very detrimental to delay the transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqis scheduled for June 30. "I am afraid that would have a very negative effect on the Arab world and on European countries," he said. Abizaid concurred, saying that July 1, 2004 was a chance to move from occupation to partnership.

¶18. (S/NF) The discussion also included a review of U.S.-UAE military cooperation, including the F-16 program, the Gulf Air Warfare Center, the UAE's request for Predator, and UAE Special Operations participation in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. MbZ said he was very satisfied with the military relationship, and relieved that the UAE's F-16 training program is on track. On Predator, MbZ said he was looking forward to receiving good news from the Washington community by the time he visits Washington in early April.

¶19. (U) This cable was cleared by General Abizaid.
WAHBA